

An aerial photograph of a landscape. The left side is dominated by a dense, dark forest. The right side shows a cleared area, possibly a field or a road, with some scattered trees and a fence line visible in the lower right. The overall tone is grayscale.

THEY HAVE NAMES AND ADDRESSES

**ADDRESSES IN
CENTRAL TEXAS**



Resources

Further Reading:

Beneath the Concrete, the Forest –Crimethinc. zine

The City in the Forest —zine available at defendtheatlantaforest.org/library

I Believe That We Will Win —“ ”

Talking Back: A Preemptive Response to Media Attacks on Defend the Atlanta Forest —“ ”

A brief history of the Atlanta City Prison Farm —“ ”

Clarifications: On the arrest of six young people for “domestic terrorism” — Ill Will publication

The Strategy of Composition - Ill Will Publication

Websites:

stopcop.city

defendtheatlantaforest.org

www.stoptheswap.org

scenes.noblogs.org

stopreevesyoung.com (contains detailed information about companies contracted to work on cop city)

Social media:

Instagram:

[@defendatlantaforest](https://www.instagram.com/defendatlantaforest)

[@stopcopcity](https://www.instagram.com/stopcopcity)

Twitter:

[@defendATLforest](https://twitter.com/defendATLforest)

[@stopcopcity](https://twitter.com/stopcopcity)

News:

An Uncompromising Coalition Is Building Support to Nix Atlanta’s “Cop City” —The Intercept news article

The Battle for “Cop City” —Rolling Stone news article

Film:

Police vs. Atlanta: The Battle Over Cop City —AJ+, documentary available on YouTube

Riotville, U.S.A. —documentary

Materials for an enthusiastic individual (the following can be found online):

Affinity groups: an introduction —article, available at libcom.org

A Field Guide to Wheatpasting —Crimethinc. article

Banner Drops, Stencils, Wheatpaste, and Distributing Information —zine, available through Sprout Distro

How to Organize a Protest March —zine, available through Sprout Distro

Blocing up —zine, available through Sprout Distro

What Is Security Culture? —Crimethinc. article

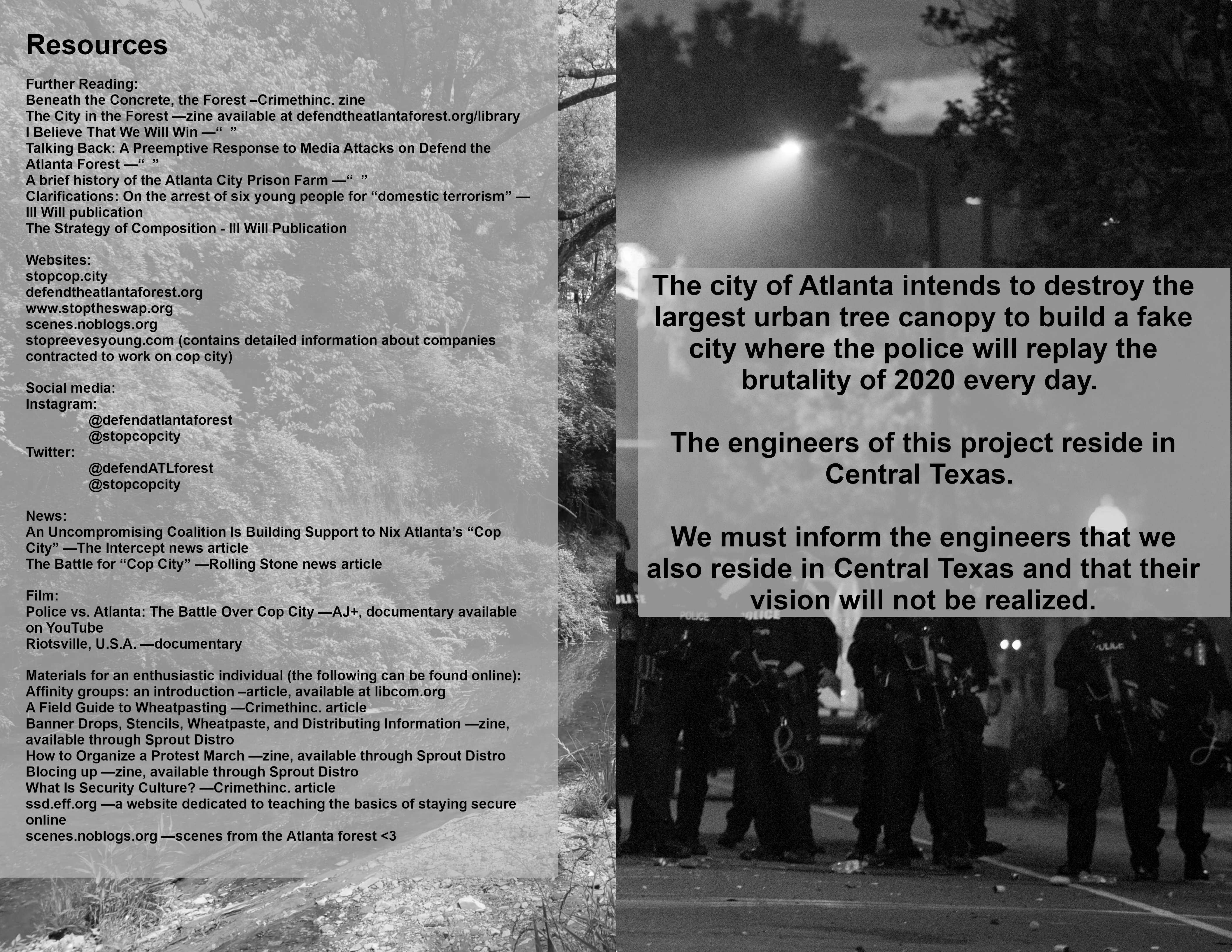
ssd.eff.org —a website dedicated to teaching the basics of staying secure online

scenes.noblogs.org —scenes from the Atlanta forest <3

The city of Atlanta intends to destroy the largest urban tree canopy to build a fake city where the police will replay the brutality of 2020 every day.

The engineers of this project reside in Central Texas.

We must inform the engineers that we also reside in Central Texas and that their vision will not be realized.



WHO WE ARE WRITING TO

We are writing to everyone who dreams of a world without police.

Everyone who thinks a city's police should not be a standing army.

Everyone who marched for Black lives in 2020.

Everyone who believes ecological destruction is a grave threat to life on Earth.

Everyone who is disgusted by the theft and desecration of indigenous lands.

Everyone who believes we all deserve access to nature and the land.

Everyone who chooses life over death, freedom over control, love over brutality.

We are writing to Austinites who are looking to fight back against police brutality and the destruction of Earth. We are here to clarify how that struggle is taking place in Austin, and we are inviting you to participate.

We are sure you agree: The situation is untenable. We are here to do something about it.

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE FOREST

This story begins in Atlanta, Georgia. In the fall of 2021, when Atlanta City Council officially approved a plan to build the largest policing training facility in the United States. The facility, dubbed Cop City by those in Atlanta, would be constructed on land in the South Atlanta Forest. The South River Forest is the largest urban canopy in the United States.

The 80-acre Cop City compound would include a mock city block for state-of-the-art riot control training, space to experiment with chemical weapons dispersal, a burn building for controlled fires, space for explosives training, more than a dozen shooting ranges, and a Black Hawk helicopter landing pad. This would in total cost \$90 million. The rest of the public park has been promised, via a land swap with a neighboring county, to a Hollywood movie studio to build a sound stage complex.

The motivation for this project is not lost on us. It is not merely about money, but it is about power. It is about the Atlanta Police Department reasserting itself after 2020. They are scared about what happened. They are scared that we asserted our collective power, and they want to prepare in case we do it again. They make no apology for their racial violence, their prioritization of property over human life, or their defense of the rich. We protested their brutality, and between the tear gas in the streets and the plans for Cop City, they have made their response clear: "We will become more brutal."

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

For those who can: Go to the forest. You need nobody's permission. We need forest defenders.

For those who must remain in Central Texas: Atlas should be your focus. Make the company reckon with its participation in police brutality and ecocide by whatever means you find suitable.

Do not wait for further instructions. Do not wait for a leader. The time is now. The place is here. The thing to do is begin.



THIS IS A UNIVERSAL STRUGGLE

If you've heard of the Stop Cop City movement, you may have encountered the sentence "This is not a local struggle." This is not simply a call for solidarity, this is a clarification of our situation. Since the 2020 uprisings, the governing organs of the United States have made one thing clear: Dissent will not be tolerated. Appeals to safety, order, and civility are a Trojan horse for the proliferation and intensification of policing. Police oversight bills in local governments give more funding to police departments, "better training" is code for more money for ammunition, "less lethal" munitions are just new tools to brutalize, and halo cameras installed for "public safety" serve to document any possible resistance to the wrongs of this world.

After the tragic events of May 2022 in Uvalde, Texas, the Texas Department of Public Safety has proposed a \$1.2 billion training facility for active shooter situations. We leave it to you to decide whether insufficient training was the issue in Uvalde. Then we ask you to ponder what other uses police may have for this facility.

In Michigan, there is an effort to stop the expansion of the largest military training facility in the U.S., Camp Grayling. The movement calls itself Stop Camp Grayling. The premise is the same as that of the Stop Cop City movement: autonomously organized individuals coming together to oppose the destruction of nature and the expansion of militaristic power. We applaud this effort and understand that it is the same struggle. We will see more situations like this, and these movements must communicate and support each other. Those fighting in Michigan will learn things that will help the fight in Atlanta, and vice versa. These lessons may one day be crucial for a fight in Texas.

This movement is about understanding how different lines of struggle intersect, about what we have in common. In Atlanta, we share the forest. Nationally, we share the struggle against military and police training facilities. Globally, we share this planet. A fact of the 21st century is that oppressing forces are no longer as obvious or as central. It is no longer one fascist government dominating a given country but myriad multinational corporations and governing bodies buying and destroying land, dominating any individual they come across. There is no Gestapo eavesdropping; rather, there are cameras everywhere, real-time digital surveillance, algorithms to identify "extremists". The forces of domination know no fixed physical form. They have no nationality. If domination is everywhere, we must resist everywhere. To dominate there is to dominate here. To struggle here is to struggle there.

This movement is about finding new ways to organize ourselves, new ways to live, new ways to fight, and feeling good while doing it.

This is not only an issue about policing. Atlanta has the highest percentage of tree canopy of any major metro area in the country. If both projects see completion, Atlanta stands to lose over 300 acres of tree cover and forest, which hosts many forms of local wildlife. This area is the only large green space in an already highly militarized area of historically Black South Atlanta. The forest is a source of biodiversity, a site of resilience to climate change for the city, and a space for coming together outside of commercialized spaces. Long before this project emerged, and until the 1820s, the forest was home to the Muscogee, who knew it as Weelaunee Forest. Weelaunee Forest still holds great significance to many Muscogee people.

As a result of all this, something else happened in 2021. A dedicated, fierce, and inspiring coalition formed to oppose these development projects. This includes the Black-led collective Community Movement Builders, members of the Muscogee, environmentalists, abolitionists, anarchists, and members of the Atlanta DSA. They have assembled in some cases under movement slogans or banners such as Defend the Atlanta Forest, Stop Cop City, Stop Reeves-Young, and Stop the Swap.

This movement, however, maintains no centralized leadership, instead favoring spontaneity and a diversity of tactics. It primarily describes itself as "decentralized" and "autonomous." If you are defending the forest, you are participating. Tactics have included occupying the forest to stop construction, parties and shared meals in the forest, the construction of structures in the forest to support people living there, protests not only in the streets but at the offices of companies working in the forest, protests at the homes of CEOs of such companies, banner drops, phone blasts, a lawsuit to stop the land swap, tree sitting, and direct sabotage of construction equipment.

The forest has become not just a site of protest but a place of joy and community. In the forest, people come together to eat, discuss, laugh, play, create, and conspire. In the words of one forest defender:

"There's joy in our fight. This spirit, this forest, will never be able to be contained. Everywhere you look, the police are trying to shrink our worlds, shrink our lives. But we have chosen to say no. Our fight extends beyond the borders of this forest—it extends through our expressions of collective and individual joy, incomprehensible to the narrow imaginations of the police and the ruling class that they protect. We laugh harder than them, we feel more pleasure even in the midst of their assaults. Falling in love with these woods has meant falling in love with one another and with the possibilities of this world—a love that the police will never understand, and therefore cannot crush."

-Excerpt from "Letter from a tree sitter"
Essay in Crimethinc. zine "Beneath the Concrete, the Forest"

A significant feature of this movement is that it not only opposes—deforestation and police violence—but creates. Many who go to the forest stay for extended periods, with some having lived there for over a year. Buildings are erected, tree sits are established, tents dot the terrain, a communal kitchen prepares food for those in the forest, banners are hung, and the forest is adorned with art by those living there. Parties are thrown, music is played, meals are shared. A place is created. We have something to defend, something to lose, but that also means we now have something which gives us life, which brings joy: a space that gives back to us.

At the time of writing this, the movement has been going strong for more than a year and maintains its strength. However, tragically, in December 2022, six tree-sitters were arrested and are facing domestic terrorism charges in the state of Georgia. These charges carry a five-year minimum sentence, while several tree-sitters were, while being held, placed in solitary confinement, denied medications, and denied water. Furthermore, many structures erected by those in the forest were destroyed.

But within days, the movement sprang back. Rebuilding has begun. Noise demonstrations have taken place outside the jails where tree-sitters were being held. National attention has been placed on what is obviously a ploy to repress the movement. On December 27, all six forest defenders were granted bail; even a judge was not buying the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's drivel about dangerous terrorists hiding in the woods and threatening the public good. The Atlanta Solidarity Fund, a bail fund established in 2020, was able to bail out all of them and for now they are safe and free. When there is any meaningful resistance there will be repression. What we have here is a lesson in collective resilience, a lesson in solidarity and support networks—something any movement should aspire to.

On January 18th there was another raid, this time an extremely violent one. The Atlanta police murdered one of the forest defenders. Their name was Manuel 'Tortuguita' Paez. We will leave it to those closest to Tortuguita to tell their story. What we will say is that Tortuguita's commitment to the forest will never be forgotten, and that we fully commit to honoring their life and their efforts. Within hours vigils were being planned all across the nation. Friends shared stories, photos, and supported one another in mourning. This has been a profoundly sobering event for many who have been organizing to defend the forest. We must understand that now is the time to strengthen in our resolve and to care for one another. We must fight harder, and love harder.

Fifteen others were also arrested during this raid, seven more charged with terrorism. Again, there has been immediate movement to get them bailed out. We will support them. We will continue their fight. Cop city will never be built.

We have much to do.

OPPORTUNITY IN TEXAS

Those in and around Austin, Texas, are in a unique position in relation to this movement. Rather than simply showing support online or donating, anyone in Texas can participate directly in an essential way.

A central strategy to this movement is to pressure companies working on Cop City to drop out of their contracts.

This strategy was taken from the playbook of successful animal rights campaigns. It makes large projects like Cop City expensive and time-consuming; the idea is that eventually, after losing numerous contracts, the city of Atlanta will give up on Cop City. The APF has already seen financial sponsors, including Coca-Cola, drop out after public outcry about this project. The APF must hire someone to do construction for them; one company, Reeves-Young, was already pressured into dropping out. Other companies continue to face pressure from opponents of Cop City.

One such company is Long Engineering. Long Engineering works with Brasfield & Gorrie, the general contractor for Cop City, to destroy the Atlanta forest. Long Engineering is a subsidiary of Atlas Technical Consultants, which is headquartered in Austin—in Bee Caves, to be precise. The CEO also resides in Bee Cave—in a multimillion-dollar home. Atlas vehicles have also been spotted in the Weelaunee Forest near construction areas.

Convincing Atlas and Long to cease operations with the APF would be a massive win. It would likely set back construction by months and be very costly for the APF. Furthermore, having multiple companies drop out of construction would likely deter other companies from becoming involved.

As of this moment, there have been demonstrations at the CEO's house and at the Atlas main office. But more must be done. We need consistency, a diversity of tactics, creativity, and some boldness. The pressure must be unrelenting and must intensify if this tactic is to be successful. We need propaganda, banner drops, protests at workspaces and in public, awareness campaigns, public statements by those with political swag, and direct confrontation of Atlas executives. One may look to the blog at scenes.noblogs.org or the Defend the Atlanta Forest Twitter page (@defendATLforest) for examples of actions taken against Atlas, Long, and other companies.